

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 1-15 were previously canceled.

Claims 16 and 35-41 are canceled by this Amendment.

Claims 17-22 and 26 are currently being amended.

This amendment changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 17-34 (18 claims) are now pending in this application.

Restriction Requirement/Election

The Examiner has maintained the restriction requirement and has made it final. Claims 35-41 were withdrawn from further consideration. Applicants have canceled claims 35-41 but reserve the right to file a divisional application for such restricted and canceled claims.

Allowed/Allowable Claims

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 27-34 are allowed and that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants have rewritten allowable claim 17 in independent form and included all of the limitations of independent claim 16. Further, Applicants have amended dependent claims 18-22 and 26 such that claims 18-26 now depend, directly or indirectly, from independent claim 17. Accordingly, claims 17-26 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner has rejected claims 16 and 18-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Oike et al. (US Patent No. 5,939,165).

Applicants submit that this rejection is moot in view of the cancellation of claim 16 and the amendment of claims 18-26 to depend from allowable claim 17.

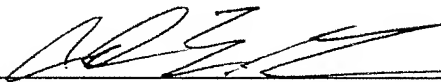
It is submitted that each outstanding objection and rejection has been overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Applicants request favorable reconsideration of the application as amended and allowance of all pending claims 17-34.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is believed that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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